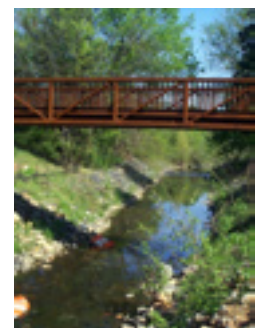


Little Sugar Creek

GREENWAY MASTER PLAN

Executive Summary



Mecklenburg County
Park and Recreation Department
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USE & INTENT

The Little Sugar Creek Master Plan is the official document for the development of Little Sugar Creek Greenway. The Master Plan comprehensively defines and illustrates the long-range improvements for the 15-mile greenway. In addition, it documents the public input that was solicited throughout the planning process and the resulting character and theme of the greenway. Also included in the Master Plan are design guidelines for the proposed greenway improvements. These guidelines are unique to Little Sugar Creek and further advance the distinct context, history, and sense of place that the greenway evokes.

official guide and document to future improvements for the greenway it is, nevertheless, a lengthy and expensive document to produce and distribute. In an effort to convey the essence of the Master Plan to a wide range of groups, organizations and individuals the County of Mecklenburg authorized the preparation of the Little Sugar Creek - Executive Summary. The Executive Summary is an abbreviated overview of the master plan and is intended to summarize key findings, conclusions, and conditions that are contained in the master plan. All interested groups and organizations are encouraged to refer to the master plan for more detailed context, background and detail.

2

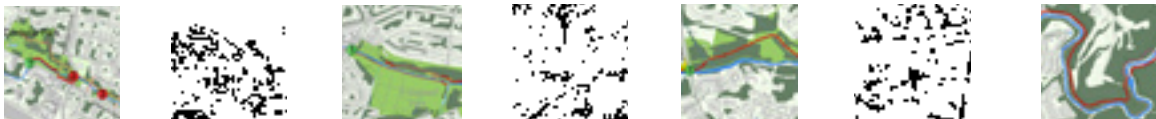
While the Little Sugar Creek Master Plan remains the

Little Sugar Creek

GREENWAY MASTER PLAN



A tool for development for a 15-mile trail system along Little Sugar Creek





Photos from top left: Public participation during the Little Sugar Creek Summer Workshop 2001; public participation during first public workshop for Little Sugar Creek master plan, August 2002; representative from the Metrolina Walking Association was one of many interest groups who participated in the second public meeting in September 2002; existing greenway in Cordelia Park; one of the proposed greenway route paths near First Ward; example of boardwalk trail; and example of urban trail.

the greenway master plan maps

The Community Greenway Map is the basic greenway map which locates the primary greenway trail from Cordelia Park property ownership, street crossing designations, and locations of pedestrian bridges.

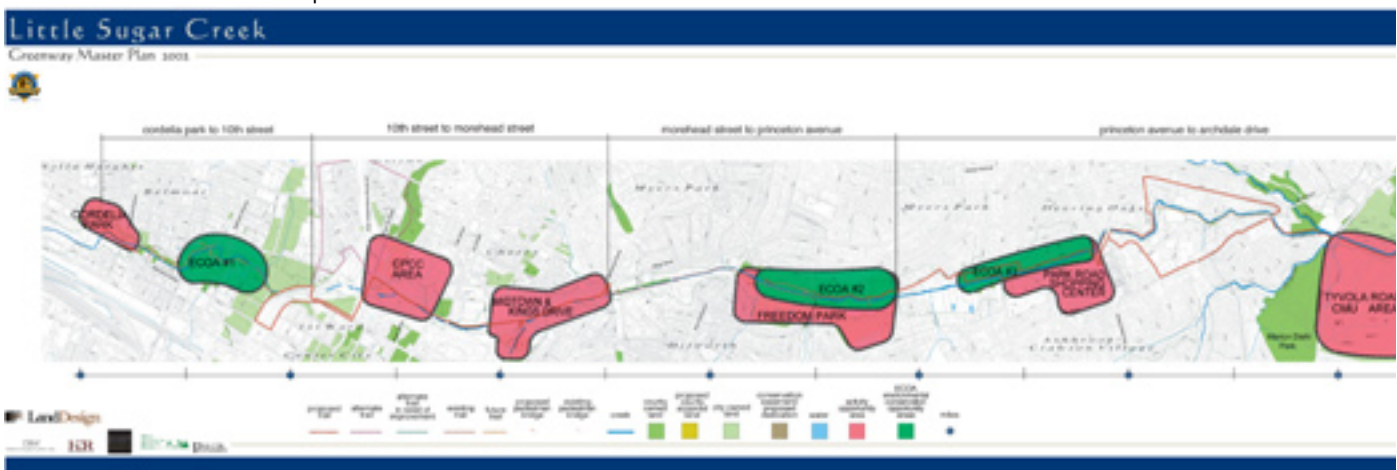


4

The Neighborhood Connections Map illustrates how people can get to and from the greenway. It identifies linkages there would be alternate trails to ensure accessibility and to create options which connect important landmarks with the greenway. This map also recommends where there could be road, bicycle and streetscape improvements which would enhance



The Opportunity Areas Map locates places along the greenway that have one of two types of opportunities: 1) economic increased activity areas are places along the greenway that will have a mutually beneficial relationship to the greenway. These areas have been studied and we are presenting concept plans in this document under the each reach. potential natural elements and character.

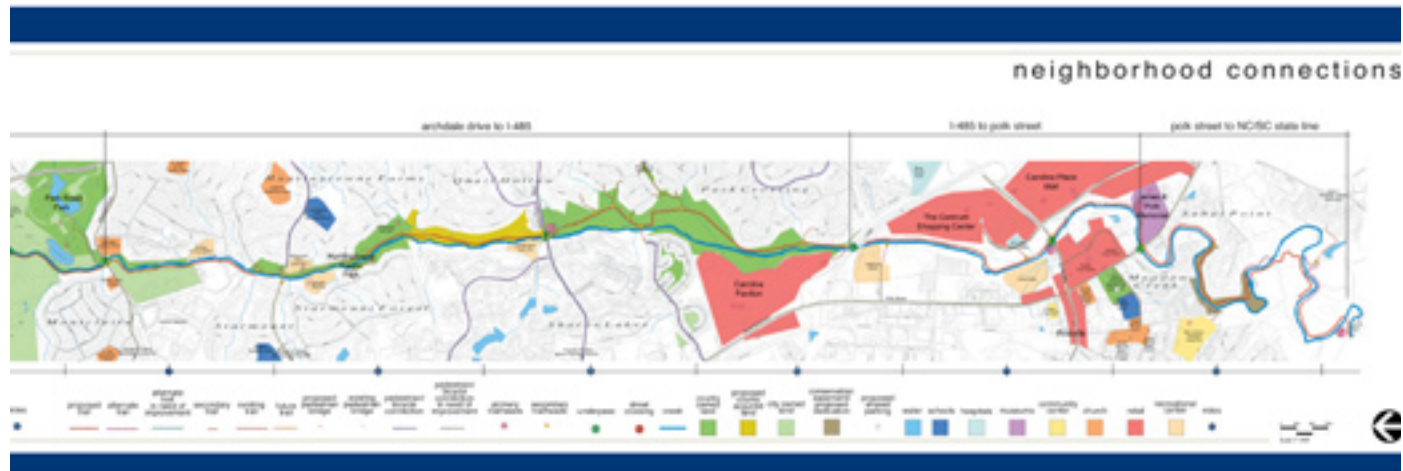


to the North Carolina / South Carolina line. The map illustrates which side of the creek the trail should be located, county

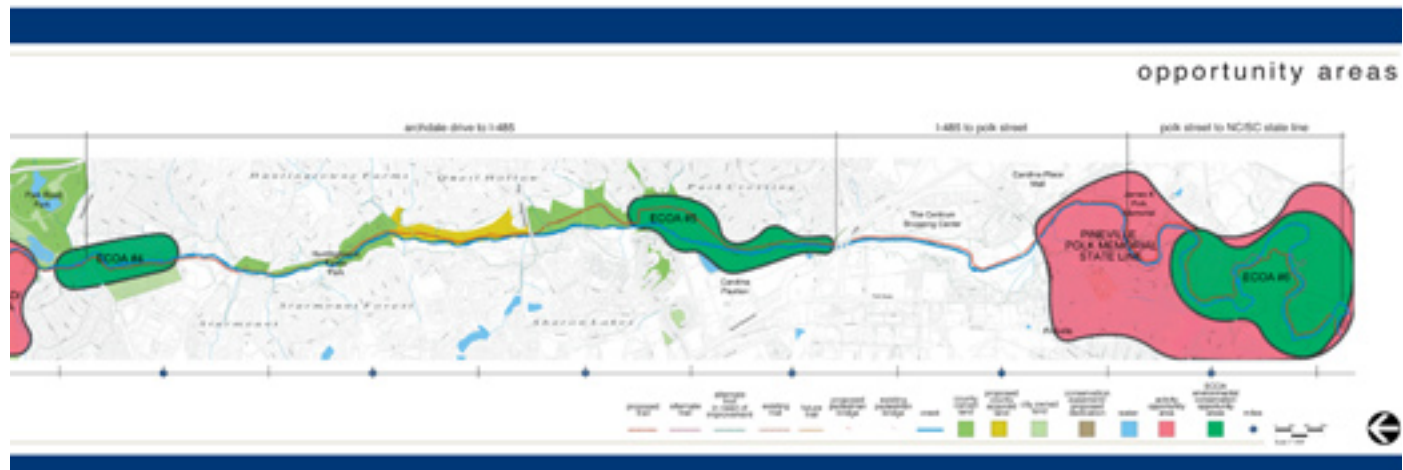


into neighborhoods, schools, hospitals, shopping, parking, uptown, public transportation. It also identifies places where greenway. the greenway system. This map identifies primary and secondary trails and trailheads.

5



development or increased activity areas or 2) environmental conservation opportunity area. Economic development/ which could spur economic growth opportunities or an increase in activities similar to those found in a park. Environmental Conservation Opportunity Areas are areas that merit protection and conservation due to their existing or



SUMMARY OF REACHES



6 dents and neighbors that live by and use the greenway. Each is different and each has its inherent attributes.

Combined, these distinct reaches define the physical boundaries that were used to prepare the master plan. Each reach has specific programming elements; proposed greenway improvements, trail connections,



Little Sugar Creek greenway is composed of seven distinct, yet related “segments” or “reaches” that each have their own character, opportunities and constraints for greenway development. Each “reach” of the greenway serves an emerging or historic neighborhood, specialty commercial or retail area with a combination of employment or service centers. A wide range of roadways, highways and transit modes also serve all the reaches. Most importantly, the seven reaches were self-identified and demarcated by the resi-

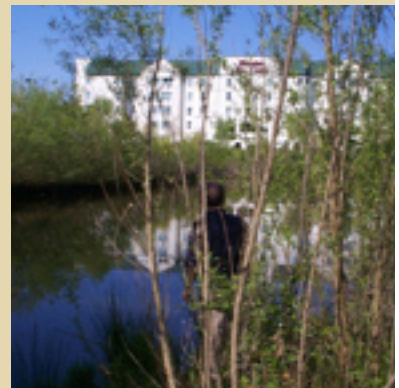
dent and vehicular crossings and related infrastructure improvements. The proposed improvements for each reach were reviewed by citizen groups, special interest groups, governmental agencies, and the residents and homeowners that live adjacent to the greenway. Throughout the public input and involvement process both the technical and homeowner issues and concerns were identified and addressed as part of the master planning effort.

There were three overall

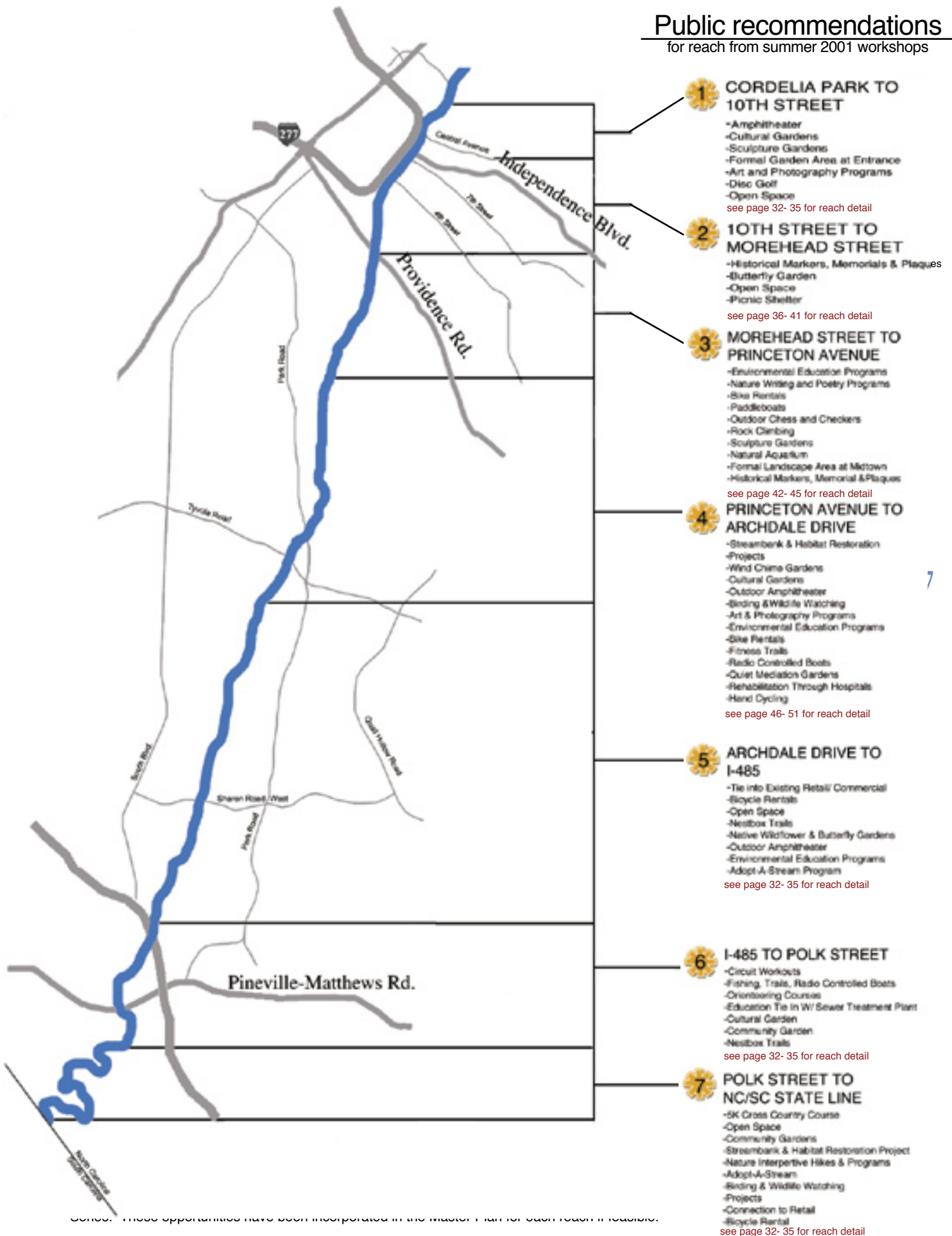
objectives in preparing the greenway plans and proposed improvements for the reaches, namely:

- Plan and design a paved and continuous trail extending from Cordelia Park to the South Carolina State line;
- Respect and honor the input, ideas and suggestions of property owners along the greenway;
- Incorporate a wide range of uses, facilities and services along the greenway that encourages residents to utilize the corridor for active, passive and educational purposes throughout the year.

It is important to note that approximately 13,000 homeowners and businesses live or operate a business within a half-mile of Little Sugar Creek. There are over twenty (20) neighborhoods along the greenway corridor with eleven (11) elementary schools, two (2) middle schools and one (1) high school. Clearly, access to the greenway is a community benefit for residents, businesses and visitors so that they can better access and utilize neighborhood schools, churches, medical facilities, places of employment, and community parks.



Public recommendations for reach from summer 2001 workshops



Notes: These opportunities have been incorporated in the master plan for each reach if feasible.

GREENWAY PROJECTS

The Little Sugar Creek greenway is approximately 15 miles in length and contains seven character districts or reaches. As of 2002, the City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County had acquired approximately 60% of the land required for the proposed greenway improvements. In addition approximately 3.2 miles of greenway trail was completed. As described above, each reach along the greenway reflects specific programming and use requirements that are intended to benefit and better serve not only the adjoining neighborhood(s) but also the overall Charlotte community. Several greenway project improvements were planned for each reach. Some reach areas required more extensive infrastructure improvements, others required better access. Regardless of the extent or nature of the improvements the overall objectives stated above were achieved.

Below is a brief summary of greenway improvements for each reach. In addition to illustrating the proposed improvements there is a detailed estimate of probable construction cost for each reach area. Please note that these costs are preliminary in detail and do not reflect the following associated costs:

- Land
- Private sector improvements
- Professional services
- Hazards and remediation

The majority of improvements reflected in these cost estimates are for greenway improvements that specifically provide for trail access and circulation. In some cases, the master plan illustrates extensive private-sector improvements in order to simply demonstrate the feasibility of accommodating future uses and facilities. Specifically, the cost estimate for greenway improvements is limited to:

- Clearing and demolition
- Grading, earthwork and drainage
- Trail improvements
- Pedestrian and vehicular crossings
- Site development
- Structures
- Furnishings and Fixtures

It is important to note that the costs outlined above reflect the majority of greenway expenses that will be required to implement the master plan during the next 10 years.

8

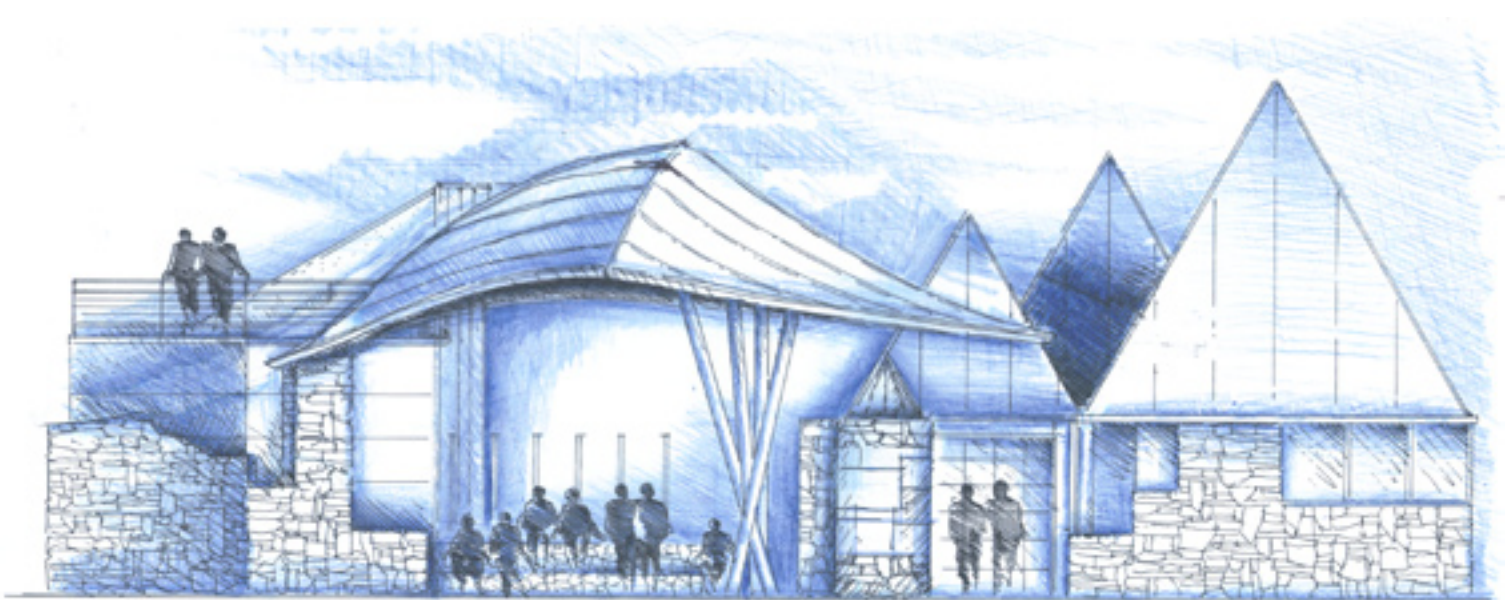


Illustration of the proposed North Carolina / South Carolina Greenway Welcome Center to be located near the state line. The design and character are based on the villages and structures from the Catawba and Cherokee Nations, which have a long history in the Little Sugar Creek and Catawba River watershed.

cordelia park to 10th street



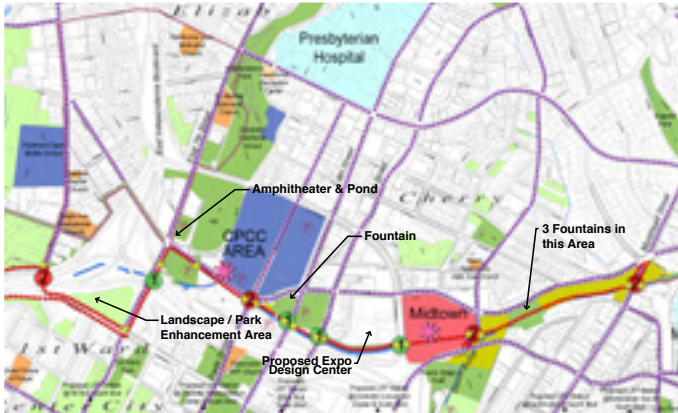
neighborhood connections map



The greenway in this section will reflect the ecological importance of the creek system. The existing trail is 10 foot wide asphalt path which will remain. The improvements would be composed of ecological and aesthetic enhancements consisting of naturalized plantings, water quality ponds and demonstration gardens.

The planning cost estimate for this reach is approximately \$1.76 million.

10th street to morehead street



neighborhood connections map



cpcc opportunity area



The Kings Drive and Midtown Opportunity Areas will be exciting and lively. The Midtown redevelopment would provide creek-front retail and restaurants with a residential component overlooking the creek and greenway. The greenway would link Pearle Street Park to the development and the adjacent Cherry neighborhood.

The planning cost estimate for this reach is approximately \$5.27 million to construct.



kings drive opportunity area



morehead street to princeton avenue



neighborhood connections map



The character of Freedom Park will not be changed through this master plan. Freedom Park is seen as an opportunity area because it attracts a large number of people, and will naturally be used as a primary trailhead for the greenway. Freedom Park will continue to be used for a variety of passive and active recreational activities, such as tennis, field sports, walking, picnicking, running, and dog-walking to name a few. More environmental and ecological education activities will be available in partnership with the Nature Center as the restoration is completed.

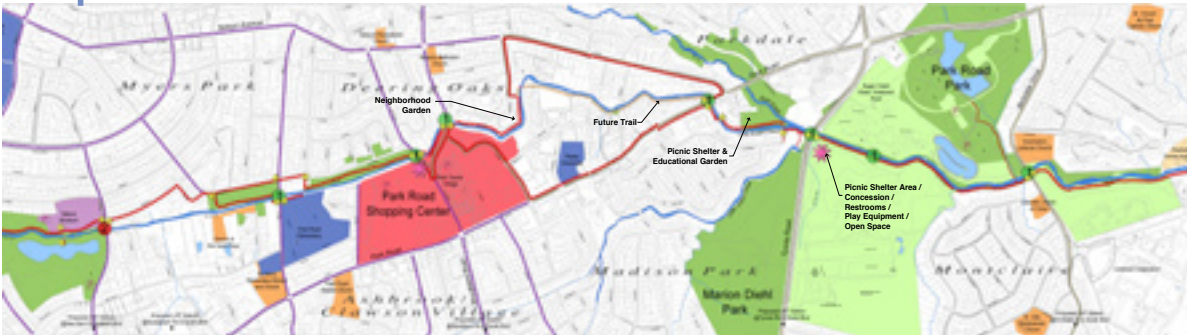
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The planning cost estimate for this reach is approximately \$1 million to construct.

freedom park opportunity area



princeton avenue to archdale drive



neighborhood connections map



12

westfield drive opportunity area

In this reach the greenway will become a unifying resource connecting neighborhoods with shopping and recreation. The creek will cease to be a barrier and become an aesthetically pleasing neighborhood amenity. It will provide areas of passive recreation, active recreation, natural habitats, and educational outdoor opportunities. Westfield Drive will be a place to picnic, play frisbee, walk your dog, observe nature, or just relax under a tree. The greenway could foster a relationship with Park Road Shopping Center, providing future creekside dining and shopping opportunities.



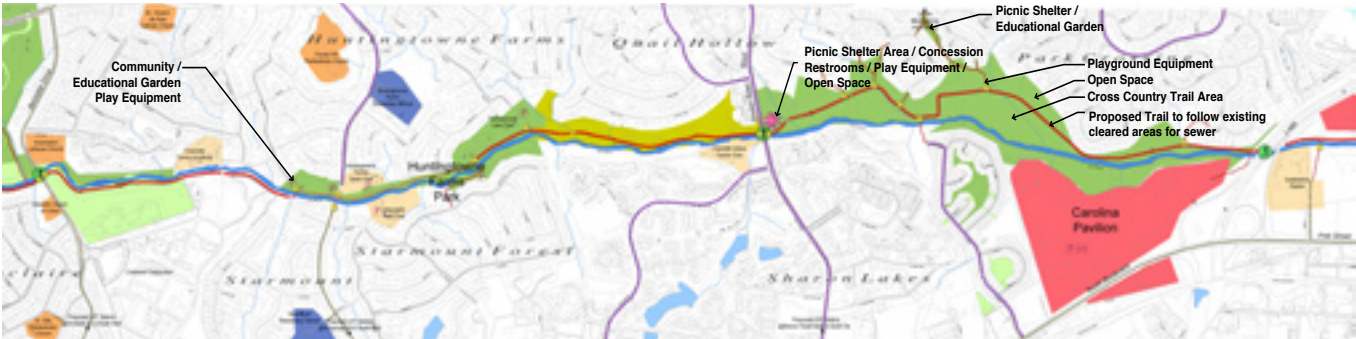
cmu & park road park opportunity area

The Master Plan recommends the development of unused Charlotte Mecklenburg Utility Department property as a primary trailhead and park geared towards passive recreation. The park would be linked by secondary loop trails to Park Road Park and Marion Diehl Park. As a primary trailhead, the park would need to provide public parking for greenway users, a shelter with restroom facilities, and park features such as informal sports fields, children's play equipment, and a system of multi-use secondary trails.



The planning cost estimate for this reach is approximately \$6.9 million to construct.

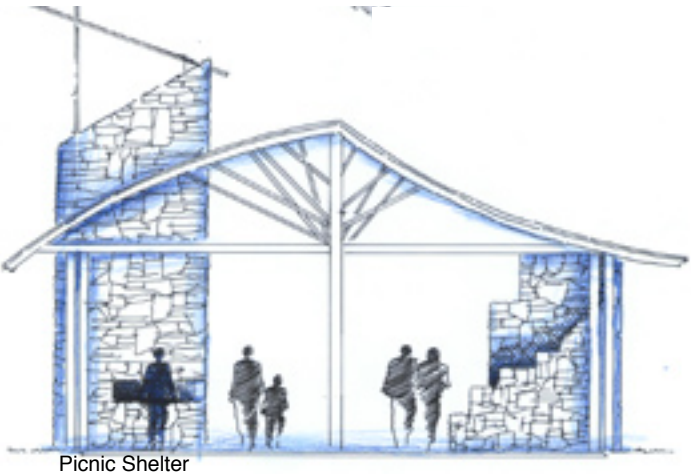
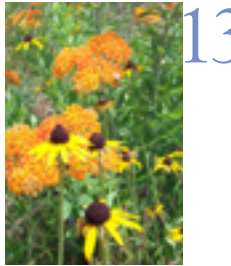
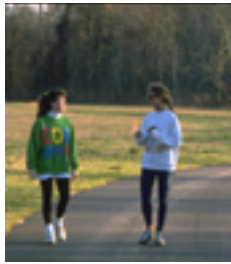
archdale drive to 485



neighborhood connections map

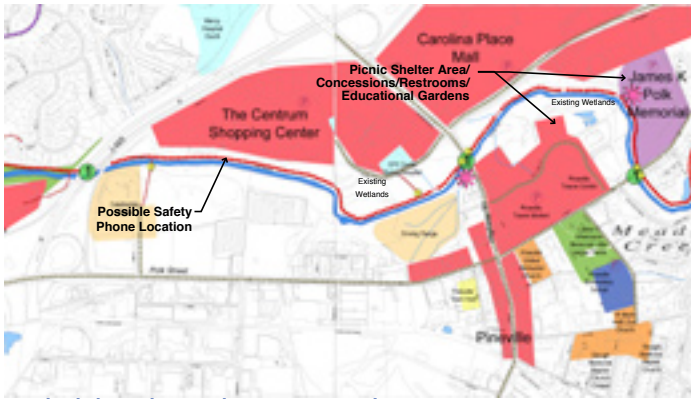
The character of this reach is similar to the previous one, Princeton to Archdale. The greenway will serve as a link to amenities outside of the reach, like Park Road Shopping Center, Park Road Park, and Carolina Place Mall for example.

For residents who live near the creek in this reach, the greenway will act as a linear neighborhood park, offering areas for children to play, ride bicycles, and meet their friends.



The planning cost estimate for this reach is approximately \$5.2 million to construct.

485 to polk street



neighborhood connections map



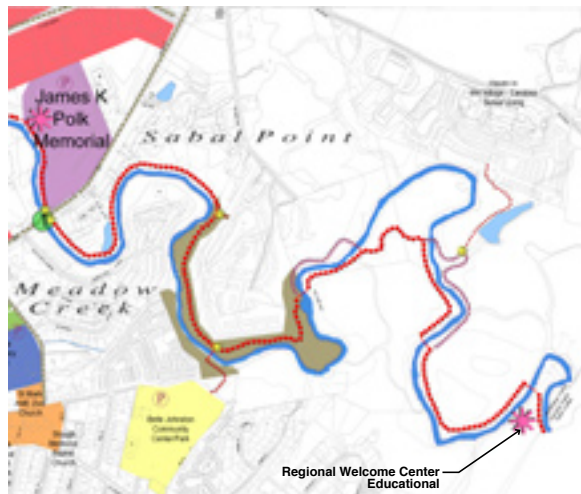
One of the most exciting linkages the greenway would encourage would be between historic downtown Pineville and the James K. Polk Memorial. A greenway user could begin at either place and enjoy a day of antiquing, lunching at a cafe in Pineville, and strolling or biking to the Polk Center, which would receive exposure and publicity through the creation of the greenway, to learn about the history of early settlements in Mecklenburg County.

The addition of a greenway bus/shuttle service could make this a one-way one-mile walk, a distance that is a viable recreation option to a wide variety of people. This opportunity area has also been identified as a beginning or end point for a full day greenway experience, which would also suggest that a greenway bus/shuttle would be ideal to transport users from one end of the greenway to the other.

The planning cost estimate for this reach is approximately \$3 million to construct.



polk street to NC/SC state line



neighborhood connections map

The proposed character of this reach and opportunity area is largely about celebrating connectivity and natural preservation.

The connections in this reach are numerous and varied. There is an opportunity to create a bi-state Greenway Welcome Center, ideal as a starting or ending point for one's greenway experience. The welcome center would serve as a regional attraction and could also meaningfully celebrate the rich heritage of the Catawba and Cherokee Nations.

In this reach the connections to South Carolina's proposed Nation's Ford Greenway, the Anne Spring Close Greenway and to the Lower McAlpine Greenway in Mecklenburg County open up the opportunity for a much longer greenway trek, while creating large expanses of protected natural corridors.

In this reach, Little Sugar Creek has retained its natural meander and character. The adjacent uses have not encroached on the natural vegetation around the creek as in other areas (although it development is threatening.) The beauty of the natural environment in this reach merits protection from future development through conservation. It's natural character is a true asset to the community.



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The planning cost estimate for this reach is approximately \$4.2 million to construct.

THE GREENWAY PARTNERS

Throughout the United States there are remarkable greenway projects that communities have planned and developed with great community support and enthusiasm. In all cases, the support and enthusiasm of the greenway effort was a grass roots and community-based effort requiring multiple public agencies supported by broad public understanding and acceptance. Perhaps no other city has the history, legacy, and natural conditions to implement the Little Sugar Creek greenway plan as the City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County. There is a genuine and realistic commitment on behalf of the citizens and the leadership community to planning and building the greenway. This assertion has been demonstrated for over 30 years as Little Sugar Creek improvements advance each year.

There are notable greenway partners that without their continued support, advice, consultation, and enthusiasm – the Little Sugar Creek greenway would cease to be a viable community asset. Below is a list of individuals, groups, organizations, agencies and other entities that have participated in a significant way to the planning, design and implementation of the Little Sugar Creek greenway. This listing of the greenway partners is a public recognition and affirmation that no great public project can ever be achieved without the broad and inclusive support and understanding of the community it serves.

Organizations of groups associated with LSC greenway:

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Mecklenburg County Board of County Commissioners
Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Commission
Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department
Mecklenburg County Storm Water Services
Mecklenburg County Real Estate Services
Division of Natural Resources
Stewardship Advisory Council – Trail Use Committee
Little Sugar Creek Action Committee
Little Sugar Creek Steering Committee
Charlotte / Mecklenburg Creek Coordination Committee
Mecklenburg County Land Use and Environmental Service Agency (LUESA)
Partners for Parks Foundation
Central Park Districts II and III and South Park District Advisory Councils

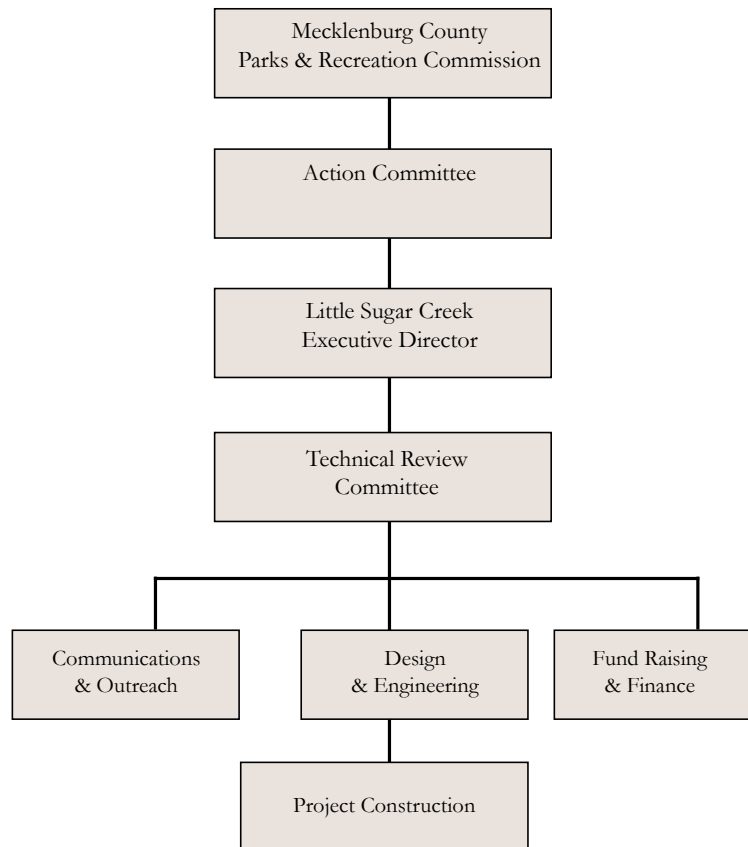
Listed below are groups and agencies which have a more vested interest in the greenway due to financial responsibility, and/or land ownership:

stakeholders

Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utilities Department
Mecklenburg County Board of County Commissioners
Carolinas Medical Center
City of Charlotte
The Nature Museum (Discovery Place)
Central Piedmont Community College
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education

It is the intent to maintain regular announcements and communications to the greenway partners. This listing of greenway partners is the basis for sharing information regarding the status of planning and implementation for the greenway. Please use this listing as a resource to learn more about the Little Sugar Creek greenway or to become a member of the greenway partners.

little sugar creek organization



Implementation of the Little Sugar Creek Greenway master plan is a significant undertaking, requiring a strategic and disciplined application of resources. Many groups and individuals will be involved in development of the greenway. While it is hoped and expected that individuals responsible for the conception of the plan will maintain an involvement for the duration of the plan implementation, it is likely that like all plans implemented over an extended time frame, there will be a transition among those involved with implementation. The plan itself is the roadmap for the physical development, however implementation also needs an organizational framework to provide continuity and leadership.

The Action Committee was created by the Park and Recreation Committee in 2001 to provide guidance

to the planning and development of the Little Sugar Creek Greenway. The makeup of the Action Committee is diverse including business and civic leaders, elected officials, neighborhood leaders, and staff. The committee considers and initiates project promotion, real estate and land acquisition, and fundraising, and makes recommendations to the Park and Recreation Commission. This committee should continue to provide this guidance for the duration of the implementation process.

It is recommended that a full-time staff position be created for an Executive Director for the Little Sugar Creek Greenway. As the project moves into implementation, this position will be critical to provide the needed focus, coordination and continuity required for all large projects. The Executive Director would report directly to the Parks Director, Parks Environmental Resources Division head, and Action Committee. The responsibilities for the Executive Director will include administration, communications, technical review, fundraising, and plan implementation. Maintaining an effective outreach to the Little Sugar Creek partners would also be a role of the position.

A Technical Review Committee was formed to help guide the development of the master plan and to insure regulatory compliance and coordination among the technical disciplines. This committee, made up of professional staff, should also continue during plan implementation.

This organization will provide the framework needed to effectively guide implementation as projects are brought forward and progress through the stages of communications and outreach, design and engineering, and fundraising and finance.

TECHNICAL REVIEW & APPROVAL PROCESS

18

During the past several years and throughout most regions of the United States the process of reviewing and approving public projects has necessarily become arduous, expensive, and confusing. Much of this is caused by and required for the protection of the public health, safety, and welfare. While no one would dispute the need to provide adequate review of public improvements – the planning and implementation of greenway projects should be a relatively less complicated matter than most public works projects.

In addition, Charlotte/Mecklenburg has a proud tradition of streamlining its review and approval process in order to provide its citizens with effective and efficient public services. The proposed technical review and approval process for the Little Sugar Creek Greenway is intended to achieve the following objectives:

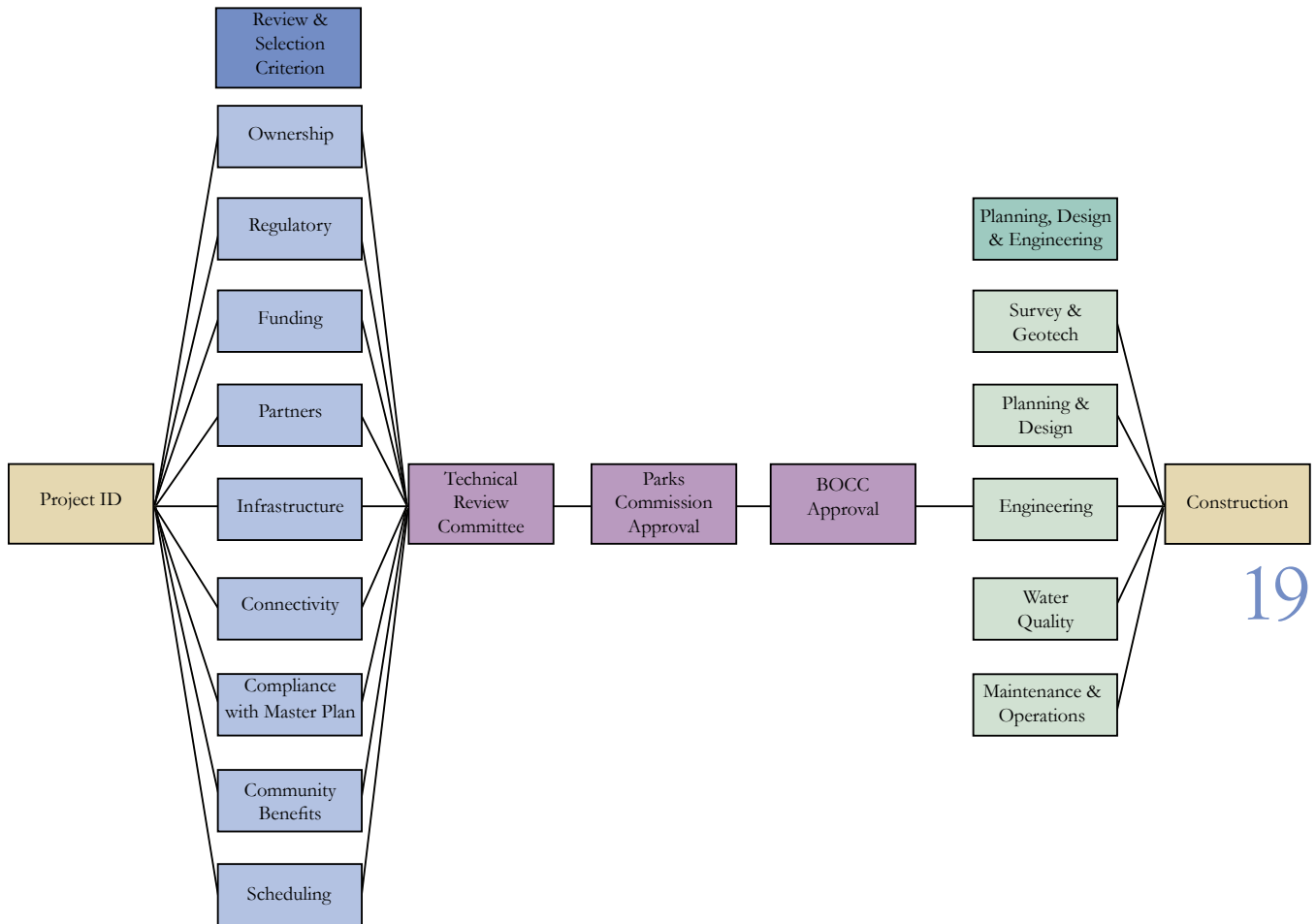
- Establish a clear project (reach) selection criterion for greenway projects that is known and understood by the public, governmental officials, property owners, and others that are directly or indirectly influenced by greenway improvements.
- Consolidate and compress the need for multiple-agency review into a single Little Sugar Creek Greenway Technical Review Committee that is representative of the technical expertise and authority to review the proposed greenway projects.
- Confirm and revise, as necessary, the Little Sugar

Creek Greenway master plan as the official planning and implementation document that will guide and direct future policy, fiscal and physical improvements.

- Document the environmental, economic and recreational costs and benefits associated with the future improvements of the greenway so that other communities can benefit from our experience.

Following is a diagram of the suggested process;

little sugar creek approval process



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The technical review and approval process will not replace or delete the need for any of the active public or private groups, agencies or organizations that are currently involved with the future development of Little Sugar Creek. The new review and approval process will simplify, streamline, and increase communications among the affected agencies to allow for a more efficient and effective implementation.

PLANNING COST ESTIMATE

Not included the cost estimate: land acquisition, “Opportunity Area” improvements beyond greenway proper.

Reach 1-	Cordelia Part to 10 th Street 1.2 miles (75% existing)	\$1.76 million
Reach 2-	10 th Street to Morehead Street 1.7 miles	\$5.27 million
Reach 3-	Morehead Street to Princeton Ave. 1.6 miles (75% existing)	\$953,000
Reach 4-	Princeton Ave. to Archdale Dr. 3.0 miles	\$6.9 million
Reach 5-	Archdale Drive to I-485 3.8 miles (15% existing)	\$5.17 million
Reach 6-	I-485 to Polk Street 1.6 miles	\$2.98 million
Reach 7	Polk Street to NC/SC line 2.1 miles	\$4.18 million
Total length/cost	15 miles	\$34.25 million

